

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PROP, CSCE, SOPN, CGEN, UR, US  
SUBJECT: WHITNEY/PIPER SLANDER CASE - SOVIET PRESS  
REACTION

REF: MOSCOW 16866

1. IMMEDIATE WAVE OF "FACTUAL" SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF JULY 18 PIPER/WHITNEY TRIAL (REFTEL) HAVING PASSED, LATEST COMMENT IN PRINT ON CASE REVERTS TO MORE USUAL SOVIET STYLE OF INSINUATION AND HEAVY-HANDED IRONY.
2. JULY 23 EDITION OF "SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA" CARRIES ARTICLE ON PAGE THREE ENTITLED "AND WHAT DO THE AUTHORS OF THESE FALSEHOODS THINK?" ("A CHTO DUMAYUT AVTDRY FAL'SHIVKI?"). SIGNED BY ONE A. SEREGIN, ARTICLE IS REACTION TO STATEMENTS MADE IN POST-TRIAL PERIOD BY NEWSMEN THEMSELVES AND BY SENIOR EXECUTIVES OF THEIR NEWSPAPERS. OVERLY "CUTE" STYLE AND UNSUBSTANTIATED ASSERTIONS ARE VERY MUCH FROM THE "LITERATURNAYA GAZETA" SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM.

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3. AUTHOR ANALYZES SUPPOSED FONDNESS OF AMERICAN PRESS FOR SENSATIONALISM, EVEN "SENSATIONALISM ALL TANGLED UP WITH LIES." LATEST OBJECTS OF SENSATIONALISM, WRITES SEREGIN, ARE REPORTERS THEMSELVES, "H. PIPER AND C. WHITMAN" (SIC). AS BACKGROUND, AUTHOR CLAIMS THAT "FOR SOME TIME ANTI-SOVIETISM HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY PROMINENT IN THE U.S." SENSING THIS TREND, "SCRIB-

BLERS" DECIDED TO GET ON BANDWAGON. THEIR ARSENAL, SAYS SEREGIN, INCLUDED "FALSEHOODS, RUN-OF-THE-MILL FABRICATIONS, AND FORGERIES."

4. PIPER AND WHITNEY, ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, "ALLOWED THEMSELVES" TO PRESENT GAMSAKHURDIA'S "CONFESSION" AS A "FABRICATION HAVING, IN THEIR OPINION, NOTHING IN COMMON WITH THE TRUTH" (COMMENT: ONCE AGAIN, SOVIETS DELIBERATELY CONFUSE NEWSMEN'S REPORTING OF SOURCES' VIEWS WITH EXPRESSION OF CORRESPONDENTS' OWN OPINIONS). SINCE GAMSAKHURDIA TESTIFIED THAT HIS TELEVISION APPEARANCE ACCORDED WITH WHAT HE HAD ACTUALLY SAID, THAT SHOULD SATISFY ALL OBSERVERS, OPINES SEREGIN. BUT INSTEAD, PIPER AND WHITNEY HAVE BEEN BASKING IN LIMELIGHT. SLIPPING IN A SLUR ON THE NEWSMEN'S PERSONAL COURAGE, SEREGIN WRITES THAT "WE WILL RETURN TO MOSCOW, CRY THE HEROES THEMSELVES WHO WERE PRUDENTLY 'VACATIONING' IN THE U.S." "DO YOU THINK, DEAR READER, THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO PAY THE FINE LEVIED ON THEM BY THE COURT," THE AUTHOR CONTINUES. "NOTHING OF THE KIND. THEY'LL PAY THE FINES, BUT THEY DON'T WANT TO OWN UP TO SLANDER AND LIES."

5. SEREGIN THEN QUOTES RECENT REMARKS BY "SUN" SENIOR EDITOR DONALD PATTERSON AND "TIMES" SEYMOUR TOPPING. WHEN HE CITES TOPPING'S COMMENT ABOUT THE NEED FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRESERVING "DETAILED AND HONEST" REPORTING, SEREGIN REACTS IN MOCK HORROR AND AWKWARD PROSE - "STOP, MR. S. TOPPING\*" AS FOR HONEST REPORTING, HE SAYS, BETTER THEY SHOULD READ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS ACCOUNT OF GAMSAKHURDIA'S TESTIMONY AT THE JULY 18 HEARING - "YOU COULDN'T PUT IT ANYMORE ACCURATELY."

6. COMMENT: SUBSTANTIVELY, ARTICLE OFFERS NOTHING NEW, BUT TONE OF MOCKERY AND RIDICULE DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR FUTURE STATUS OF NEWSMEN IN QUESTION. THE RATHER OMINOUS LAST SENTENCE OF SEREGIN'S ARTICLE ("IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW HOW YOU WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO GET YOURSELVES OUT OF THIS ONE, GENTLEMEN") SEEMS TO US TO BE A SCARCELY-VEILED WARNING OF THINGS TO COME. FINALLY, SEREGIN PREDICTABLY SEEMS TO VIEW ANY WILLINGNESS OF NEWSPAPERS TO PAY COURT COSTS AS TACIT ADMISSION THAT NEWSMEN DID INDEED COMMIT SLANDER. WE TRUST THAT SUN AND TIMES ARE FULLY AWARE THAT THIS IS HOW PAYMENT WILL BE PERCEIVED AT THIS END. TOON

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## Message Attributes

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